

276
SOME

THOUGHTS

ON THE

IMPORTANCE

OF THE

Linnen - Manufacture

TO

*I*RELAND,

AND HOW TO

Lessen the Expence of it.

D U B L I N:

Printed by and for GEORGE FAULKNER,
M D C C X X X I X,

3042

THOUGHTS

ON THE

IMPORTANCE

OF THE

Lincoln - Manuscript



AND

AND HOW TO

Lesson the Experience of it.

DUBLIN

Printed by J. G. & Co. at the Press of the

University of Dublin



TO THE

READER.

BY the Dates of the following Sheets, you will see the Author has been in no Haste to publish them, notwithstanding the Request of some of his Friends. Being at last persuaded they may be of Use, if published before the ensuing Session of Parliament, he has been at the Pains to review them, and finds it necessary to explain some Things whereby Objections may be obviated.

Where he settles 400 Weight of Flax, and four Barrels and a half of Seed as the Produce of one Acre, he doth not mean that there are not many that have greater Returns, but he only sets forth the

Returns in general, which makes the Bulk of Flax Husbandry ; so, when he fixes his Calculation of Flax at the Prices mentioned in his Papers, he doth not mean that it is never sold cheaper, but only that the Prices he has fixed upon were the general Prices nearest a Medium ; and he begs Leave to observe here, that there having been much Seed sowed in the Year 1737, it was so cheap in 1738, that greater Quantities than usual were sowed that Year, the Consequence was a great Return of Flax, which brought down the Price of what came to Market, to two Pence Half-penny and three Pence per Pound (which was chiefly bought up by the Gray Merchant, and is now retailed by him at five Pence and Six-pence) this proceeded from a plentiful Crop of Seed in 1737 ; but, as the Seed failed much in 1738, there is not so much sowed in

in this Current Year, 1739, so that there is no great Reason to expect the Flax at so cheap a Rate as last Year.

Where he settles the Medium of Cloth manufactured, at a 1400 (which he did after taking different Advices) he doth not pretend to determine that to be absolutely the Medium, for although the Medium were reduced to a 1200, his Hypothesis would stand good, and the Calculations built thereon would only vary in a small Proportion.

In the reducing heckled Flax back to scutched Flax, he took the Rule from his own Experience, which he had carefully minuted down; but any Body conversant in that Way knows, that in the working of Flax, it will produce more or less Tow, Hurds and Waste, according to the Quality of the Flax and Skill of the Workman, but although the Difference in the Flax

or working it, may vary the Calculation, it doth not destroy the Rule.

As to his Calculations of the Number of Hands employed, he took the best Rule that, he believes, can easily be had.

If he might hope, by what he has done, to stir up a Spirit in those who have the Power to add the Weight of that Power to the Endeavours of the Multitude, there can be no Difficulty in carrying our Linnen Manufacture to the greatest Perfection, in a very few Years.

SOME



SOME

THOUGHTS

How to lessen the Expence of the

Linnen-Manufacture, &c.

September 1737.

IT may be granted as a Postulatum, that we ought to bring our Flax to Market as cheap as the *English*, but Flax of *English* Growth has been imported within these two Years at 28*l.* *English* Money per Tun; if the Difference between the Expence of Labour in *England*, and *Ireland*, be considered, I desire it may be granted that our Flax ought to come to Market at 28*l.* *Irish* per Tun: This being laid down as an Argument,

It is alledged, that at the extraordinary Wages exacted by our Flax Dressers, our

Farmers can get little or nothing for their Flax, if they should sell it at 28*l.* per Tun; for the Flax-Dresser will have 18*d.* per Stone of scutched Flax, for breaking and scutching (to the doing whereof he takes two Days) together with his Diet, which for two Days, at three Meals a Day is well worth one Shilling, so that the Farmer pays for breaking and scutching 2*s.* 6*d.* per Stone, or 20*s.* per Hundred Weight, or 20*l.* per Tun; at this Rate the Farmer gets but 8*l.* per Tun for his Rent and Labour, that is to say, for plowing, harrowing, sowing, shoveling, weeding, pulling, rippleing, watering, grassing; and drying, admitting he gets Seed from the Board.

Now one Tun of Flax is more commonly the Produce of five Acres than otherwise, it may happen that some Acres may produce 500 Weight, but Gentlemen would do well not to be too sanguine in an Opinion that 500 Weight is the common Medium, especially when such an Opinion serves no End; whereas, if 400 Weight be too little, the Farmer, when it comes out better, is agreeably deceived. If I am in any Measure near the Truth, in this Light the Farmer has for his Rent and all his Labour, admitting Seed from the Board, only 1*l.* 12*s.* per Acre, from the Produce of his Flax.

And

When the Farmer has deducted his Rent, and all his other Expences, till his Flax is ready for the Flax-Dresser, I am doubtful this last Total will be reduced very low, and will not appear a sufficient Encouragement; and if that be the Case, as Things now stand with respect to Flax-raising, we are in a bad Way! And if that be not the Case, I desire to know, why many Gentlemen who have gone good Lengths in raising Flax for several Years together, have grown weary of it? It is one Thing to reason from Speculation, another from Practice, which Gentlemen will do well to consider in Time, lest we be found to have been rolling a great Stone up Hill!

I know it is, and may be again alledged, that instead of 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ per Tun, our Flax gives from 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ per Tun; I deny it not. This is a Part of that Grievance I pretend to complain of, and am solicitous to see rectified, for if we do not soon fall on other Measures than hath hitherto been taken, I am afraid we shall never be able to cope with foreign Manufactures in a foreign Market.

To remedy this Evil, I humbly propose, that the Number of Flax-Dressers be speedily and greatly multiplied, and for this Purpose that there be in each County six Masters (more or less as present or future Business may seem to require) fixed in certain

tain Habitations most convenient, so as to divide the County among them as equally as may be, at 10 *l.* a Year Salary to each; that each Master shall have six Apprentices, who are to be bred thorough Flax-Dressers, and that such Masters shall have each, one large House capable to contain one Tun of Flax undressed, and Room besides for, at least one Dozen, of Hands to work in, and this I reckon may be a House of eight or nine Bays, the Cost whereof may be so many Pounds.

To this House, the Country round may successively bring in their Flax ready dried, and there lodge it, and may at the same Time send in their young Men and Women to learn to use the Breaks, which an ingenious and willing Mind may learn in one Season; and that for the first three Years the Flax-Dresser, besides what Help he gets of Country Learners in the breaking Part, be allowed one Shilling per Stone scutched Flax.

I presume in three Years, there may be found, giving Allowance for Death or other Accidents, twenty Flax-Dressers in each County, whom the Board might set up with Breaks and Heckles; proviso that each of these should take three Apprentices, so that by this Means, allowing for Death, &c. as before, after six Years in this Way, and under proper Encouragement, there
might

might be found sixty or more thorough-bred Flax-Dressers in each County. And this, without taxing Men's Labour, as some Gentlemen are pleased to express themselves, would most naturally reduce their Price for scutching to 6*d.* a Stone; for by this Time, I beg Leave to suppose, that all the young Men and Women in the Country have learned the Use of the Break, and by the Favour of the Board and their Landlords jointly, every Townland has got a due Proportion of Breaks.

Whether this be fair reasoning or dreaming, I will not say, but if the Reader thinks what has been said reasonable and practicable, he will naturally conclude, that the Difference between 2*s.* 6*d.* and 6*d.* a Stone is so very great, and the reducing the Flax-Dresser's Wages to the lowest Penny, is of so great Consequence to the Prosperity of our Linnen Manufactory, that no Time ought to be lost in setting about it.

It has indeed been said by some Gentlemen, that the Price alledged to be taken by the Flax-Dressers, is not a common or fixed Price; but, as far as I have been able to inform my self, their lowest Price is by much too high! Some Gentlemen agree with me in 18*d.* per Stone, some say they get it done for 16*d.* and some for 14*d.* I have heard of none lower; but 14*d.* per Stone

Stone and two Days Diet, is 2 s. 2 d. per Stone; a most heavy Tax, if we can find a Way to to be freed from it! And here I would beg Leave to suggest, that although it be the Interest of a few, and they of the meanest of the People (who might be otherways usefully employed) that Flax-Dressing should be a Mystery, yet it is highly more the Interest of the Commonwealth, that this Craft should be perfectly understood by every Farmer and poor Householder in the Kingdom, whereby this Tax would in a Manner be extinguished, which, I hope, those who have the Power will think well of.

There are some who speak of scutching and breaking by Mills, if this be to be done more in Reality than Imagination, and done at a cheaper Rate than what I suggest, I am likely to be among the first to embrace it: But whether the Remedy be by Mills, or the Way here suggested, or any other Way yet more practicable and less expensive, sure something ought speedily to be done to ease the Farmer, and enable him to bring his Flax to Market as cheap as our Neighbours.

The next Grievance I should rejoice to see redressed, is the extravagant Price our Flax comes out at, to that, *fere primum mobile* of the Linnen Manufactory—the poor Spinners—I have ever laid it
down

down as an irrefragable Maxim, that towards the Prosperity of our Linnen Manufacture, there is a Necessity that our Poor continue poor; and here I might say a great deal on the Wisdom of Divine Providence in establishing Societies by so delicate a Combination of Individuals, but more Words were lost to illustrate a Truth so plain; but when all is said—they must live—they must be cloathed—if that is provided for them, all is done for them that ought to be done, and to do more were to encourage them to grow wanton, and raise the Price of their Labour, to the Ruin of our Staple Trade.

When the Farmer has got his Flax dressed ready for the Market, he sells it as the Case now stands, to the Gray Merchant or Retailer, at, perhaps, 35 *l.* or 40 *l.* per Tun, that is at 3 *d.* $\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 *d.* $\frac{1}{4}$ per Pound, near the Matter; this Retailer must have a Profit, and happy were it if a moderate one would serve him, but he retails this Flax (scutched) commonly speaking at 6 *d.* per Pound, seldom less, frequently more, and 6 *d.* per Pound is 56 *l.* per Tun; here is a Profit to this Retailer from 40 *l.* to 60 *l.* *per Cent.* if I err not in my Calculation. Unconscionable Profit! And were it not for a continued Parliamentary Encouragement, managed and distributed by the Trustees with the greatest Oeconomy, Prudence,

dence, and Candour, such a shameful Draw-back on the Industry of the People, or more properly speaking on the Price of Yarn, and that centering in the Hands of a few, must have sunk our Manufacture long ere this Time.

To this Evil, great as it is, and deeply rooted, I am afraid it will be hard to assign such a Remedy as will please every Body; however, suffer me to offer at one, ———suppose the Parliament should think good to give some proper additional Fund, or——suppose, of the Funds in the Power of the Trustees, they should think fit to change the Application of so much as may be thought necessary to apply, to remedy this great Evil; this granted, I will further suppose, that proper Persons in as many different Places in each County, as might be judged convenient, were appointed Factors, or call them by what Name you please, for the Trustees; that these Factors should buy up all the Flax offered to Sale in their respective Neighbourhoods, at the lowest Prices, from the several Farmers for ready Money, nay, even to get good Bargains, pay Money beforehand; and that these Factors should retail this Flax to the Spinner at 10 *per Cent.* Profit.

The Consequence I would suppose from this, would be, that if the Gray Merchant would deal in the same Trade any more,
he

he could hardly get beyond 10 *per Cent.* Profit; and if this should be the Case, it would seem a Benefit or Saving would arise to the Linnen Manufacture of 30 to 50 *per Cent.* All this is said and calculated on the Footing Flax is now sold at.

I now come to consider the Spinner; and her Case, as near as I can judge of it, stands thus——she buys (suppose) three Pounds scutched Flax at 6*d.* per Pound, she carries it to the Heckler and pays him at least 2*d.* for heckling it, that is in all 20*d.*——This three Pound scutched Flax produces of pure heckled Flax 150*z.* of Tow Flax 150*z.* of Backings or Hurds 150*z.* of Waste 30*z.* Admit that out of her pure Flax she spins five Dozen of Yarn, which she sells at

	7 <i>d.</i> per Dozen	02 11
Her Tow Flax yields 2 Doz. at }	5 <i>d.</i> per Doz.	00 10
Yarn of her Hurds—4 <i>d.</i> is }	too much	00 04
		04 01
Deduct Prime Cost of Flax		01 08

She has for nine Spinning Days } 02 05
and one Sunday }

Which is close upon 3*d.* a Day, which, were Spinners constantly employed, were reasonable Wages, provided the Flax were of

of the best, but this is seldom the Case, for they rarely make out of their three Pound Flax above four Dozen of the pure Flax, and 18 Cuts Tow Flax, so that in this View, all that she has for her Labour in nine Days is only 1 s. 7 d. $\frac{1}{2}$ which is not 2 d. $\frac{1}{2}$ a Day, and that is too little for the Poorest to live by.

To recapitulate and give a summary Idea of what has been said, we must return to the Farmer, and as to him, we must add all that is got from the Flax-Dresser to his Profit, so as to enable him to come to Market with his Flax at 28 l. per Tun.

And 28 l. per Tun being just 3 d. per Pound, if 10 *per Cent.* be added to that, as a sufficient Profit either to Factor or Gray Merchant, it will bring it, if I err not, to 3 d. $\frac{1}{4}$ per Pound, or 30 l. 16 s. per Tun: now, if instead of 6 d. per Pound, the Spinner can come at her Flax at 3 d. $\frac{1}{4}$ per Pound, take that out of 6 d. and there is 2 d. $\frac{3}{4}$ on every Pound saved, which is 90 *per Cent.* difference; room enough for a moderate Profit to the Spinner, and a great Reduction in the Price of Yarn!

If my Ignorance of the different Prices of Flax and Labour in different Counties has led me into any Mistakes, I hope such will be excused; I am of an Inland County, and judge of Things as I find them there and in the neighbouring Counties, as far as

B

I have

I have been able to inform my self, but am inclined to believe that something near a-Kin to what I have observed will be found in general over the Nation.

As both my Intentions and Endeavours to promote this Manufacture are equally sincere, I respectfully submit what is here said, to Gentlemen of better Judgment and more Experience.



Some

Some THOUGHTS on the Importance of the
Linnen Manufacture of *Ireland*, taken
from a Supputation of the Flax raised in
Ireland. September, 1738.

A 1400 Cloath taken for a Medium.

IN 21 Yards (or a Score) of 1400 Cloath,
are 35 Hanks or Dozens of Cutts of
Yarn, whereof 3 Dozen 8 Cutts, go to the
Pound of heckled Flax, so that there are
in a Score of such Cloath, $9\frac{1}{2}$ lb of heckled
Flax, or nearest thereto—a small Fracti-
on of $\frac{1}{44}$ Parts more.

I settle the Number of Yards exported,
for the Sake of a round Number, at eight
Millions, which is more than the last Year's
Export, as lately published in Mr. *Faulk-
ner's* Journal of the eighteenth of last
July.

If 21 Yards	}	19
1400 Cloath		
give $9\frac{1}{2}$ lb hec-		
$\frac{19}{19}$ ked flax what		
will	j	8000000

21) 152000000 (7238095 $\frac{15}{21}$)

3619047

The Flax necessary for 8	}	36190 HunWt.
Millions of Yards 1400		
Cloath is in or about		

But as this is far short of the home raised Flax, I shall endeavour to ascertain the Quantity as near the Truth as the Thing is well capable of, and for that End

I shall suppose 2000000 of People in *Ireland*, and that they be allowed to consume, one with another yearly, two Shirts, at three Yards and a Half to a Shirt, and to make this Supposition more likely, and to give it full Weight, we will cast into the Scale, all the Yarn exported, and all the Sheeting, Table-Linnen, and Stamped-Linnen, &c. consumed at home.

2 Shirts computed to }
be 7 Yards will give } 14000000

If 21 Yards
1400 Cloath
give 9 $\frac{1}{19}$ lb ec- 19
kled Flax } 14000000
what will }

21)266000000(I2666666

63333333

Heckled Flax necessary }
for 14,000,000 Yards } 63333 *Hun. Wt.*
1400 Cloaths must be }

To which if you add
the above Article of } 36190 *HunWt.*
Export of }

Total heckled Flax 99523 *HunWt.*

If 98 Pounds heckled Flax was the Produce of 168 Pounds scutched Flax, besides Backings or Hurds fit for Sacks and other Uses, and Waste, what must be the scutched Flax of 9952300 Pounds? And I think it must be 17060065 Pounds, or 170600 Hundred Weight; but whereas I have calculated upon short Hundreds, and that the 100 Weight carries 12lb more, therefore let the odd 12lb go in Place of Backings and Waste (which by the bye is too great an Allowance, the Backings and Waste being much more considerable) and my Calculation may be allowed to stand as full Hundred Weights, at 112 lb to the Hund.

170600 *Hun.Wt.*

I find the Medium of Flax }
imported for 3 Years last } 5064 *Hun.Wt.*

Remains of home-rai's'd }
Flax manufactur'd } 165536 *Hun.Wt.*

or 8276¹⁶/₁₀₀ Tuns. You will remember that for the Sake of a round Number, I borrowed, in my Supputation of Cloath exported, some hundred thousands of Yards, but I am much inclined to think my Calculation of home-rai's'd Flax short of the Truth, for the 100 Weight of scutch'd Flax will yield above 30lb Hurds and Waste, and taking off 12lb to make up for the long Hundred as above, there will remain 18lb on every 100 Wt. which will be 360 lb on a Tun,

Tun, and that, on 8276 Tuns, will amount to 1330 Tuns, which added to 8276, makes in the whole 9606 Tuns; so that this may suffice to justify what I borrowed, and to shew that my Estimate of home-rai's'd Flax is within Bounds.

The Price of so much Flax (call it but 9000 Tuns) as commonly sold by the Merchant, one Year with another, may be about 35 *l.* per Tun, little more or less, according to its Quality, inde 315000 *l.*
 But as commonly sold by the }
 Retailer to the poor Spinner at }
 6 *d.* per Pound, is 56 *l.* per } 504000 *l.*
 Tun, and then its Value is to }
 be reckoned }

It is true, a small Proportion of the home-rai's'd Flax comes to the Market, perhaps, not a 20th Part; but however, it was not amiss to give the Reader a View of the Value of our home-rai's'd Flax in these two different Lights, that he might have a full Idea of the Stock in that Branch of Trade produced within our selves, and of the different Prices it comes out at (when sold) from the Merchant, or Farmer, and from the Retailer, to the only Hands that turn it to Account, the poor Spinner and Manufacturer, as I have elsewhere observed.

Having thus settled the Quantity of home-rai's'd Flax, I shall endeavour to make some gross Computation of the Number

ber of Persons employed therein, wherein I shall study to keep within Bounds.

If one Weaver can weave three Yards of 1400 Cloath daily, for 300 working Days in the Year, how many Weavers are required to weave 22000000 Yards? I answer, 24444 Weavers.

And so many Yards will require Spinners, at five Days to every Pound of heckled Flax, 300 Days in the Year, 165871 Spinners.

But as I incline to think both Spinners and Weavers are computed by much too few, because none of them work so close as I have imagined; so if we further reckon upon the Hands employed in plowing, sowing, weeding, pulling, watering, grassing, saving the Seed, breaking, scutching, heckling and bleaching, I incline to think that every 400 Weight of scutched Flax, costs in Labour equal to one Hand for 300 Days, if so, set down

	42600
Add Weavers	24444
And Spinners	165871

Handsemploy'd in all the branches of this Manufacture } 232915

There are many others employed in this Manufacture, but they are like Vermin upon the human Body, that destroy it; such as your Yarn Pedlars and Cloath Pedlars, that buy from the industrious Housewife, and runs

run about from Fair to Fair, and Market to Market, enhancing the Price till the Commodity comes out so dear to the Manufacturer and Exporter, that they frequently lose by it: These Vermin will buy and sell the same Commodity in the same Market, in the Space of an Hour, for a Farthing or one Half-penny Profit per Dozen, and richly deserve to be discouraged; I therefore leave them to the Legislature.

If 2000000 be the least Number of Souls in *Ireland*, the Number of Persons above the Necessity of applying themselves to Trade and Handy-crafts are not presumed to be above one 50th Part of the whole, if this be so, then there is not employed in the Linnen Manufacture much above an eighth of the Remainder, and if it be thought sufficient to allow one eighth more for all the Handy-crafts and Traders in *Ireland*, hence the whole will amount to, *viz.*

In the Linnen Trade	232915
All other Trades	232915
Above Necessity of Trading	40000

505830

Remains 1494170

And if out of this remaining Number you set off for aged, and Children under nine Years old, 494170, there will remain one Million, not properly, or at least, not thoroughly employed.

If

If to the Hands already employed, one Million more were added, properly employed, all their Labour, or by much the greater Part of it, must be added to the Article of Export ; now, not to exceed, suppose that only 700000 Hands of the remaining one Million were fully employed as the rest now are, which is above three Times the Number of those already employed, then it is plain their Labour would produce an Export of

2400000 £.

Which with the present Ex- }
port computed at } 800000 £.

Would make in the whole 3200000 £.

N. B. I compute eight Millions of Yards exported at 2 s. per Yard.

If these Calculations be any Thing near the Truth, as it is to be hoped they are, then how much doth it import all who have the Power, to give such additional Encouragement, as may spur on this profitable Branch of Trade, a Trade suited to our Poverty ! A Trade incompatible with a rich Commonality ! No Encouragement is wanting from without, its owing to gross Ignorance, or a certain Sowerne's of Temper and peevish Partiality, when People cry out that *England* oppresses us in any Branch of Trade, wherein we do not

interfere with them; here is a Branch of Trade which they not only allow but cherish! And how little has been, from the Beginning, the Fund given for the encouraging this noble Branch of Trade! A Branch that may, with further Help, soon vie with the Staple Commodity of *England*; few who are conversant in Publick Affairs are Strangers to! It is not above one and a half *per Cent.* of the Returns of our present Export! It is collected insensibly! No Person has Reason to complain! The Merchant, commonly speaking, gives two and a half *per Cent.* Commission, how much more doth it import us to give it, to raise up a Trade so practicable! So much within our Power! So very much our Interest! So much cherished by our jealous Neighbours! And a Tax so easy, and I may venture to say, so willingly to be born!

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